IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO EASTERN DIVISION

NIKI FRENCHKO, :

Plaintiff, : Case No. 4:23-cv-00781

vs. : Judge J. Philip Calabrese

PAUL MONROE, et al.,

Defendants. :

DECLARATION OF ROBERT ROSS

- 1. My name is Robert Ross, and I make this Declaration upon personal knowledge, and I am competent to testify herein;
- 2. I am currently employed as a deputy sheriff with the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office:
- 3. I have been employed with the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office since 2006. I received my peace officer certification in 2003;
- In 2016, I was promoted to sergeant. I currently supervise the civil division of the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office;
- 5. Prior to and including July 7, 2022, I did not have any personal relationship with Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa. I did not know them beyond the fact that they were the Trumbull County Commissioners. I think I went to elementary school with Mauro Cantalamessa, but I had no personal relationship with him since that time;
- 6. Prior to and including July 7, 2022, I did know that Commissioner Fuda was the presiding commissioner. My understanding and observation was that the presiding commissioner runs the meetings and keeps them on track;

- 7. Prior to and including July 7, 2022, I did not have any feelings of friendship or animus toward Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa. I really did not know them on a personal level;
- 8. I did not ever text Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa. I did not ever speak with Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa on the phone;
- 9. Prior to July 7, 2022, I had provided security at several Trumbull County Commissioner Meetings. I do not recall the exact number of meetings that I worked at;
 - 10. The Trumbull County Commissioners held a public meeting on July 7, 2022;
- 11. I was assigned by my lieutenant (Lt. Kaintz) to work security for the July 7, 2022 Commissioners' meeting;
- 12. Sgt. Harold Wix was also assigned to work security for the July 7, 2022 Commissioners' meeting. I had not previously worked security for a Trumbull County Commissioners' meeting with Sgt. Wix;
- 13. Prior to the Commissioners' meeting on July 7, 2022, I did not know that Niki Frenchko made statements critical of Sheriff Paul Monroe and/or jail medical care. I did not know that Sheriff Monroe had authored a letter responding to Ms. Frenchko's criticisms;
- 14. About 30-40 minutes into the meeting, Commissioner Fuda asked the Commissioners' clerk, Paula Vivoda-Klotz to read a document into the record;
 - 15. Ms. Vivoda-Klotz began reading the document into the record;
- 16. At this time, Sgt. Wix and I were seated along the back wall of the Commissioners' hearing room on opposite sides from one another;
- 17. While Ms. Vivoda-Klotz was reading the document into the record, Ms. Frenchko left her seat on the dais and sat down in the first row of the public seating area;

- 18. Shortly after moving to the public seating area in front of the clerk, Ms. Frenchko began interrupting the clerk's reading of the document into the record;
- 19. I saw and heard Ms. Frenchko interrupt the reading of the document into the record at least four times. That is, Ms. Frenchko began speaking over the clerk, and, as a result, the clerk had to stop reading the document;
- 20. Commissioner Fuda repeatedly asked Ms. Frenchko to stop interrupting and speaking over the clerk;
 - 21. The clerk, Ms. Vivoda-Klotz, became visibly upset;
- 22. The clerk tried to hide her face from being recorded by Ms. Frenchko, so Ms. Frenchko stood up and moved closer to the clerk to continue recording her. Ms. Frenchko stated to the clerk: "If you are uncomfortable being on camera, then you should not be the clerk."
- 23. I could hear members of the public who were at the meeting asking Ms. Frenchko to stop her behavior;
- 24. At this point, Deputy Wix and I stood up from our chairs, and we stood next to each other in the back of the room;
 - 25. Ms. Frenchko continued to try and speak over the clerk;
- 26. When the clerk finished reading the document into the record, Ms. Frenchko returned to her seat on the dais;
- 27. Ms. Frenchko began speaking after she sat down. After speaking for about a minute, Commissioner Cantalamessa and Commissioner Fuda told Ms. Frenchko that she was being disruptive;
- 28. Commissioner Fuda attempted to move on with the meeting, but Ms. Frenchko simply continued to speak;

- 29. From my perspective, Ms. Frenchko was disrupting the meeting. She repeatedly interrupted the clerk while the clerk was attempting to read a document into the record and then, when the presiding commissioner wanted to move on with the meeting, she just ignored him and kept talking;
- 30. At that time, Sgt. Wix and I made the decision to remove Ms. Frenchko from the meeting;
- 31. Sgt. Wix got behind Ms. Frenchko's chair, told her she was being disruptive, and asked her to stand up;
- 32. Ms. Frenchko did not stand up right away. Sgt. Wix repeated his request for her to stand up;
- 33. Ms. Frenchko then stood up on her own and was directed to leave the Commissioners' Hearing Room which she did;
- 34. Neither myself nor Sgt. Wix touched Ms. Frenchko at all in the Commissioners' Hearing Room;
- 35. In the hallway outside the Commissioners' Hearing Room, Sgt. Wix and I placed Ms. Frenchko under arrest for disturbing a lawful meeting;
- 36. Sgt. Wix placed a handcuff on Ms. Frenchko's right wrist as I was asking her to set her phone down;
 - 37. Then, I placed the other handcuff on her left wrist;
 - 38. Ms. Frenchko began to tell us about various medical conditions;
- 39. Sgt. Wix offered to call an ambulance, but Ms. Frenchko did not request an ambulance;

- 40. Ms. Frenchko told us about her asthma and a mobility issue with her shoulder; Sgt. Wix told Ms. Frenchko that the jail's medical staff would evaluate her;
 - 41. Meanwhile, I double locked the handcuffs so that they could not tighten any further;
- 42. Ms. Frenchko then complained that the handcuffs were too tight. In response to that complaint, I did two things: First, I used my fingers to check the gap between Ms. Frenchko's wrist and the handcuffs. I was able to fit a full finger in between the handcuffs and her wrists which, based on my training, is an accepted technique to check for tightness. Second, I then added a second set of handcuffs so that Ms. Frenchko's arms would not be behind her back—they would be by her side. Double cuffing relieves pressure on the shoulders. After double cuffing Ms. Frenchko, I asked her: "Is that better?" She responded, "Yes." She had no further complaints regarding the handcuffs;
 - 43. Sgt. Wix and I escorted Ms. Frenchko to the Trumbull County Jail without incident;
 - 44. We advised Ms. Frenchko that she would be processed at the jail and then released;
- 45. After taking Ms. Frenchko to the jail, Sgt. Wix and I returned to the Sheriff's Office to complete our report and fill out the criminal complaint. A true and accurate copy of our report is attached hereto as Exhibit A;
- 46. Sgt. Wix and I made the decision to arrest Ms. Frenchko on our own. Nobody before, during or after the meeting on July 7, 2023 ever told us or directed us to arrest Ms. Frenchko;
- 47. Ms. Frenchko was arrested for her interruptive and disruptive conduct, not the content of her interruptions. I did not even hear or pay attention to most of what she was saying while she was interrupting;

48. I signed a criminal complaint for disrupting a public meeting. The complaint was

submitted to the Warren Municipal Court for filing along with a copy of our arrest report;

49. The prosecutor never spoke to me about the case at all. The prosecutor never told

me about any order to preserve text messages;

50. I do not recall ever being sued before;

51. I did not know that I needed to preserve all of my text messages with other deputies;

52. I know that there were no text messages to or from me about arresting Ms. Frenchko

prior to the meeting on July 7, 2022 because (1) nobody ever told me to arrest Ms. Frenchko and

(2) Sgt. Wix and I did not make the decision to arrest Ms. Frenchko until moments before we

actually arrested her;

53. To the extent that there were any text messages after Ms. Frenchko's arrest, (1) I

do not specifically recall any and (2) I did not specifically delete any. I am part of a group text

with the deputies that work in my unit. Whenever someone left the group or a new person joined

the group, we would start a new group text. I did have a practice of deleting the old group texts

whenever someone left the unit or joined the unit.

54. I declare on this 20th day of October, 2023, under penalty of perjury that the

foregoing is true and correct.

Robert Ross

Case: 4:23-cv-00781-JPC Doc #: 51-11 Filed: 10/24/23 7 of 17. PageID #: 1349 INCIDENT NUMBER **CFS SUMMARY** 22-07729 CFS# RECEIVED DATE/TIME INCIDENT DATE/TIME 22-07729 07-07-2022 11:24 07-07-2022 11:20 AM OTHER CONTACTS ACTIVITY UNKNOWN PROBLEM CALL ORIGIN RP/DS 10 DIGIT LINE DISPATCHER 0 -RESPONSE DISPOSITION ARREST MADE NAME CALL BACK PHONE CALLER FRENCHKO, MICHELE NICOLE ADDRESS ADDRESS 160 HIGH ST NW WARREN, OH 44481 LOCATION LOCATION TOWNSHIP TRUMBULL COUNTY ADMINISTRATION WARREN TOWNSHIP GRID PATROL AREA CENTER CENTER CALL TAKEN BY: 0 DISPATCHED BY: 0 07/07/2022 11:24:53 - TALBERINI - 17: 1 F21 07/07/2022 11:52:01 - SOROSS - PERSON BY SSN 07/07/2022 11:55:08 - 05591 - 17, FEMALE TRANSPORTED TO TCAJC BY 12 AND 17 07/07/2022 11:56:12 - 05591 - 17, STATUS:ARM 07/07/2022 11:59:17 - TALBERINI - // FEM NEG CITY // CALL DESCRIPTION AGENCY MINUTES UNIT **OFFICER** DISPATCH **ENROUTE** ONSCENE CLEAR ROSS, SGT. ROBERT TCSO 05591 11:24 11:24 11:24 11:56 32 WIX, SGT. HAROLD TCSO 03378 11:24 11:24 11:24 11:59 35 DISPATCHED UNITS

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	REPORTING OFFICER/ARRESTING OFFICER ROS	S, SGT. R	OBERT					BAD	05591	DATE 07-07-2022
	APPROVING OFFICER	NTZ, LT. E	y-resident					BAD	GE NO. 03377	DATE 07-07-2022
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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729		
VICTIM	OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME		
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20		

On July 07, 2022, Sergeant Wix and I were present in the weekly Trumbull County Commissioners's meeting, held in the Commissioner's Hearing Room, which is located on the fifth floor of the Trumbull County Administration Building, in the city of Warren, Ohio. Sergeant Wix and I were there to provide security for the public meeting, which was scheduled to start at 10:30 am.

During the public meeting, Commissioner Fuda asked the Commissioner's Clerk, Paula J. Vivoda-Klotz, to read a document. While Vivoda-Klotz was speaking, Commissioner Frenchko, who was seated at the Commissioner's desk area, got out of her chair with her cell phone in her hand and walked around the desk and sat in the front row of the public seating area, directly in front of Vivoda-Klotz. While Vivoda-Klotz was speaking, Commissioner Frenchko held her phone up in front of her, as if she was recording, and continuously interrupted Vivoda-Klotz by speaking and making utterances. Commissioner Fuda used his gavel more than once while saying "Point of Order!". Commissioner Fuda told Commissioner Frenchko to allow Vivoda-Klotz to finish speaking, and to stop interrupting her. At one time, Vivoda-Klotz became so visibly upset she had to stop speaking, Commissioner Frenchko said "nice" to her, in a condescending manner. Vivoda-Klotz held a piece of paper in front of her face and turned her chair sideways, then told Commissioner Frenchko she was uncomfortable with her recording her, Commissioner Frenchko then stood up and walked closer to Vivoda-Klotz and told her "if you're uncomfortable being on camera, then you shouldn't be the clerk". Commissioner Frenchko continued to speak over Vivoda-Klotz while she was speaking, which interfered with the meeting. Some of the people from the public were asking Commissioner Frenchko to stop. Commissioner Frenchko then went and sat back in her chair at the Commissioner's desk and continued to speak. Commissioner Fuda used his gavel several more times and told Vivoda-Klotz to move on with the meeting, however, Commissioner Frenchko continued to speak over him. Both Commissioner Cantalamessa, and Commissioner Fuda, told Commissioner Frenchko she was being disruptive. At that time, Sergeant Wix and I approached Commissioner Frenchko, who was seated at the desk, to remove her from the meeting. Sergeant Wix asked Commissioner Frenchko to stand up out of her chair several times before she complied. Commissioner Cantalamessa advised Commissioner Frenchko that she can be removed for disrupting a lawful meeting. Sergeant Wix and I escorted Commissioner Frenchko out of the meeting and into the hallway of the Commissioner's office. Commissioner Frenchko was advised she was being placed under arrest for disturbing a lawful meeting. Sergeant Wix placed a handcuff on Commissioner Frenchko's right wrist as I was asking her to set her phone down (she was holding her cell phone and eyeglasses in her left hand). I had to take her phone and eyeglasses out of

REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	USE VICTIM REFUSED TO COORP JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY ARREST - ADULT	ARREST - JUVENILE WARRANT ISSUED INVEST. PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST PENDING	07-07-2022
REPORTING OFFICER	ROS	S, SGT, ROBERT		8ADGE NO. 05591	07-07-2022
APPROVING OFFICER		NTZ, LT. BRIAN		8A0GE NO. 03377	DATE 07-07-2022

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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729		
VICTIM STATE OF OHIO	OFFENSE DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	INCIDENT DATE/TIME 07-07-2022 11:20		

her hand because she refused to comply, before placing a handcuff on her left wrist. Once in hand restraints, Commissioner Frenchko advised of several medical conditions, one being Asthma (she stated which is why she was coughing during the meeting), and one being a lack of mobility in her shoulder. I immediately used a second pair of handcuffs, to give her shoulders more mobility. The handcuffs were gapped and double locked. Once the second set of cuffs were on, Commissioner Frenchko did not complain of pain. I asked Commissioner Frenchko if she had any weapons or sharp objects on her, she advised no. Due to the clothing she was wearing, I could not see any weapons so a pat down was not done until it could be done by a female corrections officer in the jail. Sergeant Wix and I escorted Commissioner Frenchko to the elevator, which we took to the first floor. While in the elevator, Commissioner Frenchko told us "this is political", Sergeant Wix advised her that she was being disruptive at the meeting. Once inside the vestibule of the jail (by Central Control), I asked Commissioner Frenchko if her cell phone was done recording for security reasons, she could not record inside the jail. I handed her phone to her, she did something to her phone and said it's not recording and handed it back. Sergeant Wix and I escorted Commissioner Frenchko to booking, and advised Sergeant Nichols to have the medical staff report to booking to check on Commissioner Frenchko, who was walking and speaking to us. Commissioner Frenchko advised she did not have her inhaler, which I offered to retrieve for her if it was back in her office. Commissioner Frenchko asked if she would be staying in jail, I advised her that she would not be staying. I advised Commissioner Frenchko that she will be processed in the jail, then released.

Commissioner Frenchko is being charged with O.R.C. 2917.12-Disturbing a lawful meeting, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. Commissioner Frenchko was issued a summons to appear in Warren Municipal Court on Friday, July 08, 2022 at 9:00 am.

PPROVING OFFICER	ROS	S, SGT. ROBERT		BADGE NO. 05591 BADGE NO. 03377	DATE 07-07-2022 DATE 07-07-2022
REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY ARREST - ADULT	WARRANT ISSUED INVEST PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST PENDING	07-07-2022

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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729		
VICTIM	OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME		
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20		

On July 7, 2022, I was performing security during the public commissioner meeting.

During the lawful meeting and a reading of an official document by Clerk Paula Vivoda-Klotz, Commissioner Frenchko removed herself from her commissioners's desk and sat in the first row of the general seating public side of the room and continued recording the reading of the document with her cell phone. While the clerk was reading the document, Frenchko began to verbally interrupt the clerk to the point where she became visibly emotional and tried to hide her face with the document while reading, Frenchko then got up from the chair and approached Paula where she was seated and continued to record even when Paula turned her chair to avoid the disruption. Commissioner Fuda warned Frenchko numerous times to stop being distributive by calling a point of order and banging his gavel, in which she did not comply. Frenchko was given ample opportunity to stop her disruptive behavior, even more opportunity than the general public who attends would be afforded. When Frenchko returned to her designated seat at the commissioner's desk, she continued to be disruptive. Deputies then approached Frenchko at her desk, and escorted her from the meeting. When exiting the meeting room Frenchko stated the she has asthma and did not have her inhaler I ask Frenchko if she needed medical attention and if she did the Jail has a full medical staff to check her. Frenchko did not appear to be in any way under duress of her medical ailments. Frenchko was placed under arrest for ORC 2917.12 Disturbing a Lawful meeting. When Frenchko was being placed in handcuffs she stated she has a medical issue with her shoulders. Deputies then placed 2 sets of cuffs linked together to make her comfortable. Frenchko was then transported to the Trumbull County Jail and served a summons to appear in Warren Municipal Court on Friday July 8, 2022 at 0900.

REPORTING OFFICER		SGT. HAROLD		BADGE NO. 03378 BADGE NO. 03377	DATE 07-07-2022
REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	USCIM REFUSED TO COORP. JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY ARREST - ADULT	ARREST - JUVENILE WARRANT ISSUED INVEST PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST. PENDING	07-07-2022

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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729		
VICTIM	OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME		
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20		

On Thursday, July 7, 2022 Detective Wayne Mackey and I were informed of an incident that just occurred in the Commissioner's Hearing at a meeting.

Mackey and I interviewed two witnesses that were present during the meeting.

We spoke to clerk Paula Vivoda-Klotz in reference to the incident. The entire interview was captured on my audio recorder and it was saved to my work station. FOR EXACT WORDING AND PHRASING PLEASE REFER TO THE AUDIO RECORDING. Below is a brief synopsis of our interview with Paula.

Paula stated that she was instructed by Commissioner Frank Fuda to read a letter out loud at the end of the meeting. Paula stated that Commissioner Nikki Frenchko was filming the meeting with her cell phone on face book live and continued to film her reading the letter. At one point Frenchko got up out of her seat at the bench and went to the first row of public seating and continued to film Paula reading the letter. Frenchko made comments while filming Paula stating "oh it's hard for you, you shouldn't be the clerk if you can't have a camera on you". Paula stated that made her very uncomfortable, nervous and stressed out because Frenchko has filmed Paula many times in the past at meetings on face book live and said some "not so nice things" that the public and her family have seen. Paula remembers Frenchko getting up from the chair and moving closer (approx. 5 ft or less) to her from the side, at that point Paula stated she wanted to run. While Paula continued to read the letter she could hear Frenchko making comments to people while she was filming her. Paula stated that she took a deep breath and Fuda told to her continue to read the letter. Paula stated her voice was cracking from the stress but she finished reading the letter.

Paula stated that approximately ten people were present for the meeting. Paula stated during the meeting she saw the deputies come up to Frenchko and heard loud talking and arguing but did not want to see what was going on.

We spoke to Patricia Wyatt in reference to the incident. The entire interview was captured on my audio recorder and it was saved to my work station. FOR EXACT WORDING AND PHRASING PLEASE REFER TO THE AUDIO RECORDING. Below is a brief synopsis of our interview with Patricia.

Patricia stated that Paula read a letter in response to a subject that Commissioner Frenchko brought up at a prior meeting. According to Patricia while Paula was reading the letter Frenchko was filming her with her phone.

REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	UICTIM REFUSED TO COORP JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY ARREST - ADULT	ARREST - JUVENILE WARRANT ISSUED INVEST. PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST PENDING	07-07-2022
REPORTING OFFICER	MARCE	LLO, DET JOLENE		8ADGE NO. 02079	07-07-2022
APPROVING OFFICER	KAI	NTZ, LT. BRIAN		BADGE NO. 03377	07-07-2022

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ARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT		Investigative	Investigative Narrative		INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729	
GTIM	STATE OF OHIO	OFFENSE	ING A LAWFUL MEETING	INCIDENT DATE/TIME	-2022 11:20	
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EASON CLEAR	PROSECUTION DECLINED		ARREST - JUVENILE WARRANT ISSUED	UNFOUNDED	DATE GLEARED 07-07-2022	
EASON CLEAR	PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED CER		WARRANT ISSUED INVEST PENDING	UNFOUNDED INVEST PENDING		

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IMAGE SUPPLEMENT

VICTIM

STATE OF OHIO

OFFENSE
DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING

INCIDENT NUMBER

22-07729

INCIDENT DATE/TIME
07-07-2022 11:20

